Like Music to My Ears

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Like Music to My Ears

by WrathoftheStag

Summary

A cracky little fairy tale, involving Will Graham as a little boy, a wish upon a firefly, cheesy love songs, and soulmates.

Notes

See the end of the work for more notes

Close to You

Chapter by Mwuahna (WrathoftheStag), WrathoftheStag

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

New Orleans, Louisiana, 1984

“Willie! What are you doing? I’ve been calling you in for the last five minutes. Come on. Dinner’s gettin’ cold.”

Young Will Graham had been engrossed in a book he had checked out of the school library that discussed Plato's idea of the soulmate. Will sat on the porch, as dusk slowly crept in around him, fireflies began to dance and flutter nearby.

He pushed up his glasses and read out loud to Chester who in turn wagged his tail happily, “Humans were originally created with four arms, four legs and a head with two faces. Zeus split them into two separate parts, condemning them to spend their lives in search of their other halves.” Will’s eyes opened wide as he thought about it. Somewhere, out there was a person that was made just for him.

“Will Graham! Dinner. Now!”

“I’m comin’,” he yelled as he closed his book and ran inside, the porch door slamming behind him.

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“Daddy, do you think we have soulmates?” Will asked his father as he grabbed his glass of milk.

Will’s father contemplated the idea. His marriage had been short lived; Will’s mother ran out on them when Will was but a babe. Had he loved her? He did -- but she sure as shit hadn’t been “the one.” Still, he was hopeful that love would find him again.

“Well, I think that there are a lot of people in the world, and each one can offer you something special. But when you find the one that will make you feel complete, make you feel as important as you make them feel, then that person could very well be your soulmate.”

Will grinned as he took a forkful of macaroni and asked, “But how will you know when you found them?”

“Hell, it’s probably different for everyone. Maybe some people feel safe, or a sort of calm when their soulmate is around. Maybe you’ll hear music every time you see them,” his dad chuckled at the idea. “But I’m sure you’ll know it when you find them, Willie.”

“After dinner, can I go to the yard? The fireflies are out tonight, and I wanna chase them.”

“You sure can. Just clear the table first.”

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Will ran into the yard cupping a firefly with his hand, as Chester chased alongside him barking. Will stopped and looked around him as the glow from more fireflies intensified and appeared to illuminate him.

Will laughed, and whispered to himself, “My split-apart,” in love with the idea that one day he would find his other half, and this person would *finally* somehow make him feel complete.

He looked at the firefly in his hand and said, “Please, please, please let me know when I find them. I want to hear music whenever they’re around, just like daddy said.” The firefly glowed intensely and Will smiled as he threw it back into the air.

“Please…” Will said softly as he watched the firefly get smaller and smaller the further it went.

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FBI Academy, Quantico, 2013

There wasn’t enough coffee in the world to help Will Graham deal with his class that morning. They were either daydreaming, ogling him, asking inane questions, or just didn’t get it. Any of it. Again, not enough coffee in the world. And as if the day wasn’t already off to a crappy start, after class he was to meet with Jack Crawford, Head of the BSU, to discuss a case Crawford needed to "borrow his imagination" for.

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Will sat patiently in Jack’s office, sipping on his coffee, listening to only half of what Crawford was saying -- something about bringing in someone else to consult with the Shrike case, another set of eyes and whatnot. Jack then rose from his desk upon hearing a knock on the door. “That should be Doctor Lecter now.”

Great, Will thought, *another person to have to deal with*.

Will stayed put. If this doctor wanted to talk to him, then he’d have to come to him. As Jack made the introductions, Will just waved, without even bothering to look back at the man, and continued to drink his coffee. (And really, what kind of a name was Hannibal anyway?) Jack shrugged an apology to Doctor Lecter, who merely nodded and proceeded to walk to the evidence board and look at photos of the Shrike victims. The two continued to talk, and then Jack mentioned TattleCrime, which immediately caught Will’s attention and invoked a reaction.

“Tasteless,” Will muttered.

“Do you have trouble with taste?”

Jesus, this guy, thought Will. “My thoughts are often not tasty.”

“Not fond of eye contact are you?” Hannibal asked as he sat down next to Will. *What is he?* Will asked himself, *The Eye Contact police?*

Will then began his usual, “Eyes are distracting. You see too much…” spiel which he had long memorized. He glanced quickly at the Doctor and then something odd happened. For some reason, The Carpenters’ “Close to You” began to pipe into the room.

Why do birds suddenly appear, every time you are near?

Will paused for a moment to look for...a speaker? Who would be piping music into Jack Crawford’s office?

"And...uh...it’s hard to focus when you’re thinking those whites are -- I’m sorry. Is that someone’s phone?” Will asked.

Just like me, they long to be close to you.

Jack and Hannibal looked at each other, and then back at Will. “I don’t hear a phone,” Jack replied. “Nor do I,” Hannibal said.

“So...yeah..." Will said, eyes sweeping around the room as the music continued, "I try to avoid eyes.”

Hannibal looked at Will with what appeared to be a mixture of confusion and fascination, and said, “I imagine what you see and learn touches everything else in your mind. Your values and decency are present yet shocked at your associations, appalled at your dreams…”

Why do stars fall down from the sky, every time you walk by?

“No forts in the bone arena of your skull for things you love.”

Just like me, they long to be close to you.

“Okay, do you not hear that? Either of you?” Will demanded. “It’s the goddamned Carpenters!”

Hannibal and Jack stared at Will, and said nothing. “Will, we don’t hear anything,” Jack said with a furrowed brow, glad that Doctor Lecter was there to witness whatever that was.

Ahhhh, ahhh, ahhh, ah, ahhhhh...close to you.

Will looked at the two men angrily. Whatever humiliation they were playing at, was not appreciated, nor was he going to take it.

“Whose profile are you working on?” Will asked as he looked at Hannibal.

Ahhhh, ahhh, ahhh, ah, ahhhhh...close to you.

“Whose profile is he working on?” Will yelled at Jack.

Will stormed out of Jack's office, without looking back. Once he was in the hallway, he stood against the wall, breathing heavily.

What the fuck just happened? Will wondered.

Chapter End Notes

Yes folks, this is going to be chockful of awful, terrible, cheesy good love songs. Buckle your seat belts!

The Carpenters, Close to You.

Can't Take My Eyes Off of You

Chapter by Mwuahna (WrathoftheStag), WrathoftheStag

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Will sat on the porch of his little house, pounding back a whiskey debating if he needed another aspirin or not. Whiskey and aspirin on an empty stomach were probably not the best of combinations, but at this point in the evening all better judgement was quickly fading away.

The utter gall of Jack and that Lecter to sit there and try to underhandedly psychoanalyze him -- as if he wouldn't see right through that charade. Will huffed and took another gulp. Lecter. What was his story, he wondered. And how could he almost see right through Will?

"Bone arena of my skull. What the hell does that even mean? Fucking pretentious," Will muttered, and then began to think about the music that had been playing -- but it was easier to just ignore it than to examine it. Denial was his constant companion, and so it was that his companion suggested he file away whatever the thing with the music was until he was ready to deal with it.

The dogs gathered at his feet, sensing his unease, and Winston nudged Will's knee. He had taken immediately to the pack, and had shown himself already to be quite loyal and loving. Will offered him a broken smile, and scratched his ears.

"Hannibal Lecter," Will said quietly to himself, "With his hair...and dumb voice, and stupid cheekbones," and then he began to hum "Close to You" without even realizing he was doing so. The dogs howled.

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Motel 8, Minneapolis, Minnesota

Over the course of the next few days, Will was having a harder time sleeping than usual. Between the visions of feathered stags dancing in his head and the musical "incident," sleep was becoming quite the foreign concept. He was in Minnesota following a small lead on the Shrike case, and so far, Will was just anxious, exhausted, and grouchy.

He was aggressively pulled out of the bit of fretful sleep he was getting by the knock-knock-knock on the door. Will stumbled to his feet to open the door for whom he thought would be Jack Crawford. Wrong. Instead it was Hannibal Lecter that Will found smiling brightly before him.

"Good morning, Will. May I come in?"

"Where's Crawford?" Will asked surlily.

"Deposed in court. The adventure will be yours and mine today." Will looked uneasy as Hannibal asked once more, "May I come in?"

Will examined Hannibal's face and walked back into the room leaving the door wide open to signal his welcome, and then shuffled toward the bed to grab a pair of sweatpants. As he leaned down to pick them up, some music began to play…

You're just too good to be true.

Will immediately jumped up, and looked back to check if Lecter had turned on the radio.

Can't take my eyes off of you.

Lecter was standing politely with his back turned to Will, affording him privacy while he dressed. He was babbling something about what he puts in his body, but was nowhere near the radio.

You feel like heaven to touch.

Will pulled his pants on and began to ask, "Can you...uh…hear..."

I wanna hold you so much.

Hannibal turned around and smiled at Will, "Hear what?"

At long last love has arrived.

Will stood there, quickly taking stock of the situation. It was obvious the good doctor didn't hear the music, but Will did. So either Will's headaches were taking a serious turn for the worse, or -- or what? He was going crazy? Hallucinating? What the hell was going on?

"You really don't hear anything, do you?" Will asked slowly. "No music?"

And I thank god I'm alive.

Hannibal tilt his head, eyebrows flying up, and mouth falling open slightly, giving the impression that he really was trying to listen for something, anything.

“I’m sorry, Will. I do not hear anything out of the ordinary,” Hannibal replied.

Will appreciated the effort, and his mouth quirked into the tiniest of smiles as he took another look at Hannibal’s face and thought, *That is a good face. The body isn’t bad either. Oof! Those eyes…* And then suddenly, like a slap to the face -- fast and hard and painful -- it occurred to Will what the hell was really going on.

You're just too good to be true. Can’t take my eyes off of you.

Will’s eyes grew wide. *OH. MY. GOD.* He stumbled back slightly, and yelled out, “If you’ll excuse me, Doctor,” and ran into the bathroom, locking the door behind him.

He turned on the faucet, splashed cold water on his face, and dried it off haphazardly. Leaning against the counter and looking into the mirror, breathing heavily, he remembered what he had wished for so long ago...

Please, please, please let me know when I find them. I want to hear music whenever they’re around...

“You have got to be kidding me,” Will said to his reflection. He turned slowly to face the door and walked to it, opening it just a crack to peer at Hannibal who was setting the table for breakfast.

I love you baby, and if it’s quite alright I need you baby.

Will slowly closed the door, leaned against it and whispered, “Holy shit.”

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Will sat across from Hannibal, as he presented a ceramic container which held the fluffiest eggs Will had ever seen. Inwardly, Will was a mess. He was a live wire, ready to spark and fly into Hannibal’s arms. The arms of a man he didn't know from Adam. Outwardly, he appeared detached, annoyed, and his usual trademark cantankerous self.

“A little protein scramble. Eggs, sausage,” Hannibal said with much warmth in his voice.

Will took a forkful of what was the best tasting scrambled eggs he had ever had. He wanted to eat these eggs with this man for the rest of his life. What? Instead he spat out a curt, “It’s delicious. Thank you.”

“My pleasure,” Hannibal responded happily. “Will, I wanted to address the other day. My analytical ambush was unfair and I do apologize..."

Will had just received the bomb that this adorable complete stranger sitting before him was the soulmate he had wished for all those years ago, and it was safe to say he was having a hard time processing this. So many questions.

Hannibal continued, "...but I know I will soon be apologizing again and you'll tire of that eventually so I have to consider using apologies sparingly."

Damn, he was charming! Was he a dog person, or a cat person? A liberal, or conservative? Did he even own a pair of jeans? Had he ever held a fishing rod once in his entire life? The unending questions. So he did what any rational Will Graham would do. He shut down his feelings and crawled deep within himself until he could make a list of pros and cons, and think this thing through.

"Just keep it professional," he responded.

"Or we could socialize like adults. God forbid we become friendly."

"I don't find you that interesting," Will managed to spit out while looking at his perfect eggs made by this perfect man, not daring to look up.

"You will," Hannibal replied.

Chapter End Notes

Can't Take My Eyes Off You by Frankie Valli and the Four Seasons.

Hello

Chapter by Mwuahna (WrathoftheStag), WrathoftheStag

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for more notes

Great. Just great, Will thought -- the first thoughts he was able to put together as he stood against the rental car, completely dumbstruck and splattered with blood. Whose blood it was at this point, was anyone's guess. Though it was more than likely equal contributions from the entire Hobbs' clan.

Will trembled as he watched Hannibal get into the back of the ambulance with Abigail Hobbs. It's the day he realized he'd found the person he was destined to be with, and what does he go and do? Kill someone in front of them. Not the kind of message you want to be sending to the love of your life, really. And as the ambulance pulled out of the Hobbs' driveway, Will softly muttered, "Come back...I need you."

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Earlier…

Once breakfast was over, Will took a quick (cold) shower, got dressed, gave himself a pep talk in the mirror, and then both he and Hannibal headed out to investigate the lead. Hannibal held the motel room door open for Will, who in turn responded with a grunt and nothing more.

The drive to the construction site had been a mixture of comfortable silence and uncomfortable what-in-the-world-is-going-on for Will. Hannibal had called him a mongoose who had a knack for the monsters, and all Will could think was, "Marry me, marry me, marry me." He shut that down and continued with his original plan of Deny till You Die.

Driving down the highway, Will reached for the radio at the same time as Hannibal, their fingers grazing. Will pulled back instantly, as if he had been burned. That's when the music started once again...

I've been alone with you inside my mind.

This was a most inopportune time for his cosmic love joke to kick in, so Will just chose to ignore it.

"So, uh, where are you from, Hanniba -- Doctor Lecter?"

And in my dreams I've kissed your lips a thousand times.

Hannibal looked at Will, quirked his head and said, "I thought you had wanted to keep it professional, Will? Or should I call you Professor Graham?"

I sometimes see you pass outside my door.

Will spoke up in an effort to block the music in his head. Lionel Richie? Really? "Well, we have a long drive. What do you want to talk about, then?"

Hannibal looked at Will with a furrowed brow. "Will, why are you shouting at me?"

Hello! Is it me you're looking for?

Will gripped the steering wheel tightly, wishing he had the power to disappear, and looked at Hannibal meekly. "I'm sorry," he said and drove without saying another word. Hannibal, taking pity on Will for whatever reason, let the silence remain. If this singing telegram was to continue, Will hoped there would at least be the occasional instrumental.

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Will put the car in park and looked over at Hannibal who had a bright smile on his face. "What is it?" Will asked. "Why are you smiling?"

"Peeking behind the curtain. Curious how the FBI goes about its business when it isn't kicking in doors," Hannibal said.

"Well, it's fairly routine and boring -- and you can be thankful we aren't doing door-to-door interviews," Will responded.

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Johns Hopkins Hospital, Baltimore, Maryland

Will walked down the hospital corridor, anxious to check on Abigail Hobbs, wondering if Hannibal would there as well. And if he were there, what was he possibly thinking about Will in that moment? Would he reject him? Recoil from Will and all that he had done, and was capable of doing? What good was finding your goddamn soulmate if in turn, they rejected you? Of course, this was Will Graham so anything, and everything terrible, *was* possible.

He made it to Abigail's room, and peered inside from the doorway. What he found was Abigail, still unconscious and next to her Hannibal, fast asleep on a chair, holding her hand.

I can see it in your eyes. I can see it in your smile.
You're all I've ever wanted. And my arms are open wide.
'Cause you know just what to say. And you know just what to do.
And I want to tell you so much. I love you.

Will's breathing hitched, and he felt as though his heart might burst forth from his chest. If this were to occur, Will thought, at least he was in a hospital -- so hey, convenient. He shook his head, took a deep breath and walked into the room taking a place at the empty chair on the other side of Abigail. Soon he fell asleep, the constant beep beep beep of the machines lulling him quietly.

Chapter End Notes

Hello by Lionel Richie, because OF COURSE. The last chapter is up next, folks! Let's do this.

The End

Chapter by Mwuahna (WrathoftheStag), WrathoftheStag

Chapter Notes

"Will?"

Will felt a hand on his shoulder and heard his name being called once more, "Will?"

He slowly opened his eyes, and it was Hannibal's face that he saw immediately before him. "I apologize for waking you."

Will sat up, straightening the crick in his neck, and rubbed his shoulder. "No, it's fine," he smiled.

"I was afraid you would get a stiff neck," Hannibal said and then handed Will a travel mug of coffee. "For you," he said.

Will looked over at Abigail, sadness taking over his visage. "She hasn't responded in any way, has she?"

"No," Hannibal replied. "I imagine she will be out for some time, while her body and mind recover from the trauma."

Will nodded, his eyes never leaving Abigail's.

"Will, would you like to go outside for a walk?"

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Will and Hannibal walked quietly for a while, until Hannibal led them to a secluded bench under a willow tree. Will settled himself down with a loud sigh, and Hannibal sat closely next

to him.

“You saved Abigail Hobbs' life,” Hannibal said.

“I also orphaned her," Will huffed, "You were there. You saved her life, too...”

“I suppose. But I also feel a staggering amount of obligation. I feel responsibility. What could I have done differently for Abigail?”

“Christ, if you feel all of that -- I can only imagine what you must feel and think about me,” Will said looking down, placing his coffee on the bench.

Hannibal was silent for moment, and then said, “I don’t think you do, Will.”

Will looked at Hannibal, who in turn stared at him with what at first was an unreadable look on his face. Will examined Hannibal, eyes scanning his entire face, and he could sense admiration, compassion and something else. His empathy was hardly ever wrong, but how could that be? Could it be love?

Hannibal reached out and stroked Will’s face. And all Will could do was say, “No.” He pulled himself away from Hannibal and said, “You don’t deserve someone like me.”

“Will?”

“I...I liked killing Hobbs,” Will said quietly, “And you deserve someone better. Even if, even if...I wished for you.”

Hannibal looked at Will’s face, and said, “Wished for me?”

Will ran his fingers through his hair and said, “I know this is going to sound ridiculous, but when I was a boy I wished for my soulmate and said,” Will laughed, “that I wanted to hear music whenever they were around.”

Hannibal looked at Will, expressionless, as he continued.

“And then you showed up, and I swear to christ, I began hearing music. Honest to god. I thought I was losing my mind, but it was you -- it was all because you were finally here.”

Hannibal stared at Will, then looked off into the horizon, without saying a word.

Will continued, “But how could someone like you, want to be with someone like me?”

“Will,” Hannibal began.

“No, please. Don’t say anything."

“Will, I --”

Will continued, ignoring Hannibal, “I’m sure you think I’m crazy. Jack's not going to get an okay for my active return to the field from you anytime soon, that’s for certain -- and now

I've just made a fool of myself by saying I think you're my soulmate, and -- "

"Will!"

Will stopped and looked at Hannibal...

Paris, France, 1976

The days at the boarding school were pretty constant for Hannibal in that they fell into two categories: terrible or horrible. The time spent in the classroom was fine. With his quick wit and strong insights into all subjects, Hannibal was a favorite among all of his teachers. His schoolmates however...well, being smart, aloof and quirky is never a winning combination among the boorish and ignorant.

Alone in his room, Hannibal sat looking out the window staring into the darkness of the sky. The light pollution had hidden most of the stars, save for one. Hannibal worked hard not to cry during particularly awful days like that one. He had grown accustomed to, and quite adept at, hiding his emotions from his brusque, rude schoolmates but in the shadow of the evening, when he was alone, he could be truthful with himself.

Looking at the star, he said quietly, "One day I will meet someone. Someone who will see me, all of me. Someone who will understand me, and I will understand them. And no one else will know us -- our true selves -- but we will know each other. They'll love me above all else, and I will finally know happiness once again."

A single tear rolled down his eye.

+++

"So you see, Will, I wished for you as well. All of those years ago, and I waited and waited but you never came."

Will looked at Hannibal with complete adoration as Hannibal continued, "And then one day, Jack Crawford came into my office wanting me to evaluate someone who had a unique way of looking at things. Someone who could get inside the mind of monsters. And all it took was one look, and I knew it was you. It was you."

Hannibal reached for Will's hand and said, "It is you."

Will grasped Hannibal's hand tightly and stroked it against his face. Will no longer heard music, because in its place was Hannibal himself.

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There are some people who do not believe in fairy tales. These people call them silly childhood nonsense. One should always feel sorry for these people, as they have no imagination; no heart. And then there are those who will claim that fairy tales are real and happen around us all the time. And for a few very special people, their lives become fairy tales of wonder -- their wishes and dreams coming true in a most spectacular fashion. We owe *these* people awe.

Once upon a time in Louisiana, a young mind reader who had a knack for the monsters wished upon a firefly asking to hear music whenever he saw his soulmate. And once upon another time, a young Count -- who was also a cannibal -- wished upon a star for a mate; someone to see him and know him, so he would no longer be alone. For no one likes to be alone, you see. And when they finally found each other, it was magic.

And they lived happily ever after with their new daughter, Abigail, in their beautiful home in Baltimore, Maryland. The two men loved each other fiercely, exchanging kisses and whispering promises of eternal adoration; nights of holding each other tightly, praying to one another. And all three of them, Hannibal, Will and Abigail, shared and kept each other's deepest darkest secrets. For a Murder Family protects each other above all else.

And eventually, they even slew a dragon, but that's another story for another day.

End Notes

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